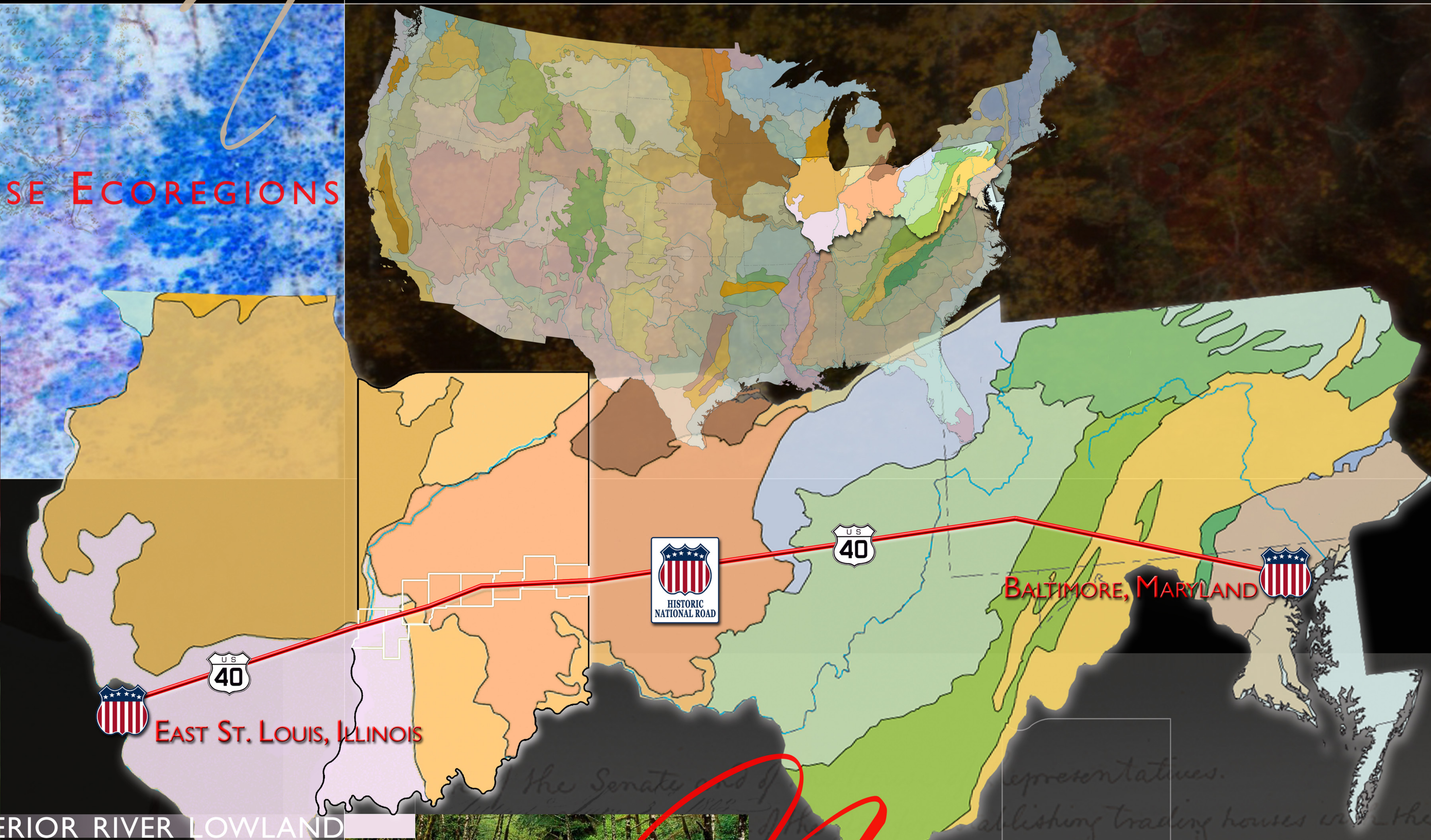


NATIVE PLANT ECOREGIONS OF THE NATIONAL ROAD

TEN DIVERSE ECOREGIONS



INTERIOR RIVER LOWLAND

INTERIOR PLATEAU

EASTERN CORN BELT PLAINS

CENTRAL CORN BELT PLAINS

ERIE DRIFT PLAINS

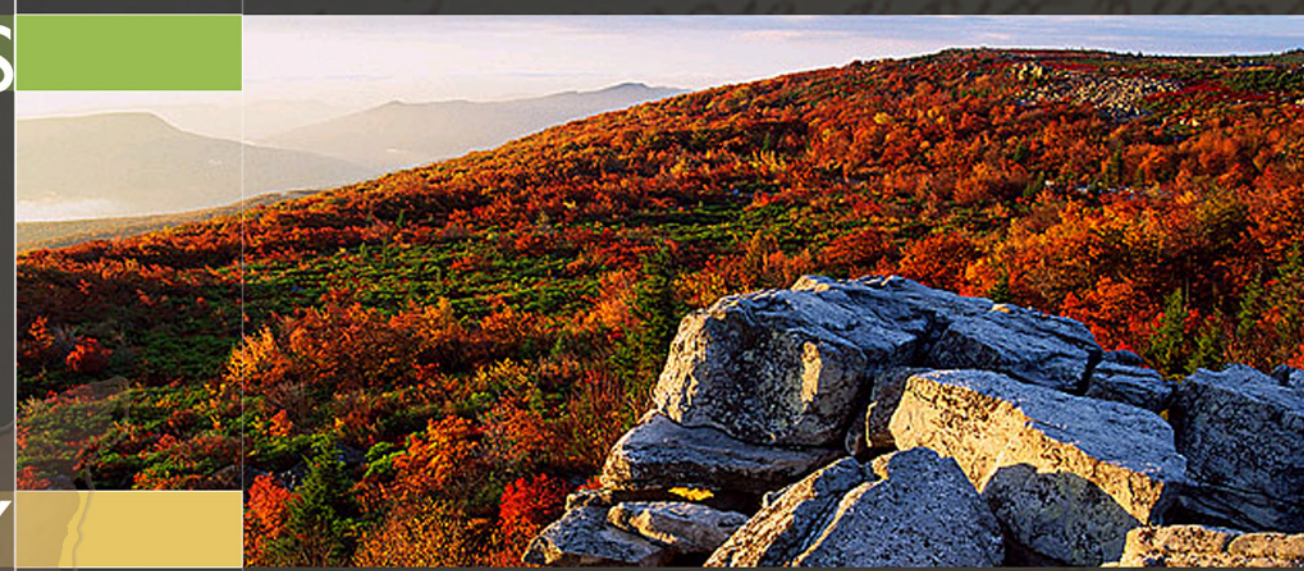
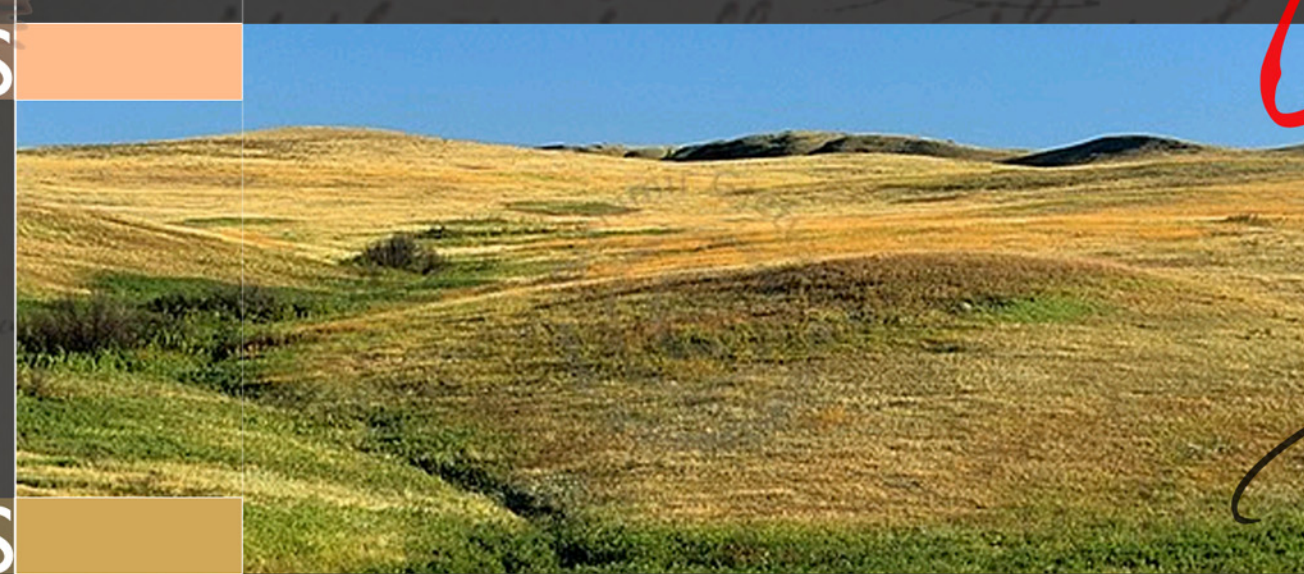
WESTERN ALLAGHENY PLATEAU

CENTRAL APPALACHIANS

RIDGE AND VALLEY

BLUE RIDGE

NORTHERN PIEDMONT



NATIONAL ROAD ECOLOGICAL HISTORY

ORIGINALLY CREATED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, ECOREGIONS REFER TO AREAS WITH GENERALLY SIMILAR CLIMATES, AND PLANT AND ANIMAL TYPES. THE GOAL IN CREATING THESE ECOREGIONS IS TO BE ABLE TO MORE ACCURATELY DEVELOP REGIONAL CRITERIA FOR POLLUTION CONTROL AND MAINTENANCE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. ECOREGIONS CAN BE IDENTIFIED THROUGH LOOKING AT THE PATTERNS AND COMPOSITION OF PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES. GEOLOGY, CLIMATE, SOILS, LAND USE, AND HYDROLOGY ARE ALSO USED IN ESTABLISHING ECOREGIONS.

WASHINGTON D.C., JUNE 20, 1803 TO MERIWETHER LEWIS ESQUIRE, CAPTAIN OF THE FIRST REGIMENT OF INFANTRY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE OBJECT OF YOUR MISSION IS TO EXPLORE THE MISSOURI RIVER & SUCH PRINCIPAL STREAM OF IT AS BY IT'S COURSE AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE WATERS OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN, WHETHER THE COLUMBIA, OREGON, COLORADO OR ANY OTHER RIVER MAY OFFER THE MOST DIRECT & PRACTICABLE WATER COMMUNICATION ACROSS THIS CONTINENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMERCE.

WITH THESE WORDS FROM THOMAS JEFFERSON, MERIWETHER LEWIS, AND WILLIAM CLARK WERE SENT INTO THE WILDERNESS OF THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH THEIR CHARGE WAS TO SURVEY THE COURSE OF WATERWAYS, LEWIS AND CLARK ALSO CATALOGED PLANT AND ANIMAL TYPES FOR NEARLY THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES. AS THE COUNTRY DEVELOPED, AND PEOPLE BEGAN TO MOVE WEST, MUCH OF THE VALUE OF NATIVE PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITIES WAS LOST.

THE 1806 LEGISLATION DEVELOPING THE FIRST MULTI-STATE FEDERAL HIGHWAY BEGAN AN AGE OF TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT THAT THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES IN TO THIS DAY. THIS AGE OF DEVELOPMENT EXPLODED IN 1921 WHEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDED AID FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS. US ROUTE 40, PRESENTLY KNOWN AS THE HISTORIC NATIONAL ROAD, WAS CREATED. BEGINNING IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND AND ENDING IN EAST ST. LOUIS, ILLINOIS, US ROUTE 40 COVERS A WEALTH OF TEN DIVERSE ECOREGIONS, FROM THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS TO THE PLAINS OF ILLINOIS FLATTENED BY GLACIERS THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO. THESE DIVERSE ECOREGIONS ARE, AT TIMES, DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER ALONG THE NATIONAL ROAD AS DEVELOPMENT HAS FORCED THE CLEARING OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS FOR CITIES, TOWNS, HOUSING, AND FARMLAND. IT IS EVIDENT, HOWEVER WHEN CAREFUL ATTENTION IS PAID, THAT ECOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IS A FUNDAMENTAL FEATURE IN THE CHARM OF TRAVELING ALONG THE HISTORIC NATIONAL ROAD.